

John Thrasher

Associate Professor

📍 Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society, 5046 Smith Lab, 174 W. 18th Ave. Columbus, OH 43210
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AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Political Philosophy, PPE (Philosophy, Politics, & Economics)

AREAS OF COMPETENCE

Ethics, Moral Psychology, Social Norms, History of Political Thought, David Hume, Adam Smith

EMPLOYMENT

The Ohio State University Columbus, OH USA

Associate Professor 2026–
Assistant Director for Research 2026–
Visiting Professor of Civic Thought 2025–2026
Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society

Chapman University Orange, CA USA

Associate Professor 2021–2025
Assistant Professor 2018–2021
Philosophy Department & Smith Institute for Political Economy and Philosophy

Monash University Melbourne, VIC Australia

Lecturer (Tenured) 2014–2018
Philosophy Department

EDUCATION

University of Arizona Tucson, AZ USA

PhD, Philosophy 2014
MA, Philosophy 2011

University of Colorado Boulder, CO USA

BA, Philosophy 2003

PUBLICATIONS

Books

2021 Gaus, Gerald and John Thrasher. *Philosophy, Politics, and Economics: An Introduction*. Princeton University Press.

2024 Korean Translation published by Purun Communication

2022 Mandarin Translation published in mainland China by Truth & Wisdom Press

2020 Halliday, Daniel and John Thrasher. *The Ethics of Capitalism: An Introduction*. Oxford University Press.

2026 Japanese Translation

Edited Volumes

2024 Moehler, Michael and John Thrasher (eds.). *New Approaches to Social Contract Theory: Liberty, Equality, Diversity, and the Open Society*. Oxford University Press.

2023 Moehler, Michael and John Thrasher (eds.). "Strategic Justice, Conventions, and Game Theory: Themes in the Philosophy of Peter Vanderschraaf." Topical Collection in *Synthese*.

Journal Articles

- Forthcoming** "Property and Plunder: A Conventionalist Response to the Colonial Objection" (with [Shaun Nichols](#)), *Oxford Studies in Political Philosophy*.
- 2025 Kimbrough, Erik and John Thrasher. "[On the Moral Conventional Distinction: An Experimental Investigation](#)." *Philosophical Psychology*.
- 2025 Thrasher, John. "[A Body of One's Own: Samaritanism, Sex, and Self-Ownership](#)." *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 53(1): 282–295.
- 2024 Thrasher, John. "[Capitalism, Democracy, and Adam Smith](#)." *Journal of Contextual Economics*. 143: 157–172.
- 2024 Moehler, Michael and John Thrasher. "[Strategic Justice, Conventions, and Game Theory: An Introduction](#)." *Synthese*. 204(28).
- 2023 Nichols, Shaun and John Thrasher. "[Ownership and Convention](#)." *Cognition*. 237.
- 2022 Thrasher, John and Keith Hankins. "[Smithian Sympathy and the Emergence of Norms](#)." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*. 105(3): 638–656.
- 2022 Hankins, Keith and John Thrasher. "[Hume's Politics and Four Dimensions of Realism](#)." *The Journal of Politics*. 84(2): 1007–1020.
- 2021 Handfield, Toby, Thrasher, John, Corcoran, Andrew, and Shaun Nichols. "[Asymmetry and Symmetry of Acts and Omissions in Punishment, Norms, and Judged Causality](#)." *Judgment and Decision Making*. 16(4): 796–822.
- 2020 Thrasher, John. "[Agreeing to Disagree: Diversity, Political Contractualism, and the Open Society](#)." *The Journal of Politics*. 82(3): 1142–1155.
- 2020 Thrasher, John. "[On Minimal Morality](#)." *Analytic Philosophy*. 61(1): 45–56.
- 2019 Thrasher, John. "[Self-Ownership as Personal Sovereignty](#)." *Social Philosophy & Policy*. 36(2): 116–133.
- 2019 Thrasher, John. "[Democracy Unchained: Contractualism, Individualism, and Independence in Buchanan's Democratic Theory](#)." *Homo Oeconomicus*. 36: 25–40.
- 2019 Handfield, Toby and John Thrasher. "[Two of a Kind: Are Norms of Honor a Species of Morality?](#)" *Biology & Philosophy*. 34(3).
- 2019 Thrasher, John. "[Constructivism, Representation, and Stability: Path-Dependence in Public Reason Theories of Justice](#)." *Synthese*. 196(1): 429–450.
- 2018 Thrasher, John and Toby Handfield. "[Honor and Violence: An Account of Feuds, Duels, and Honor Killings](#)." *Human Nature*. 29(4): 371–389.
- 2018 Handfield, Toby, Thrasher, John, and Julian Garcia. "[Greenbeards and Signaling: Why Morality isn't Indispensable](#)." *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*. 41(e103).
- 2018 Thrasher, John. "[Evaluating Bad Norms](#)." *Social Philosophy & Policy*. 35(1): 196–216.
- 2018 Thrasher, John and Kevin Vallier. "[Political Stability in the Open Society](#)." *American Journal of Political Science*. 62(2): 398–409.
- 2017 Abbink, Klaus, Lata Gangadharan, Toby Handfield, and John Thrasher. "[Peer Punishment Promotes Enforcement of Bad Social Norms](#)." *Nature Communications*. 8 (2017).
- 2016 Thrasher, John. "[The Ethics of Legislative Vote Trading](#)." *Political Studies*. 64(3): 614–629.
- 2015 Thrasher, John and Kevin Vallier. "[The Fragility of Consensus: Public Reason, Diversity and Stability](#)." *The European Journal of Philosophy*. 23(4): 933–954.
- 2015 Thrasher, John. "[Adam Smith and the Social Contract](#)." *The Adam Smith Review*. 8: 195–216.
- 2015 Thrasher, John and Keith Hankins. "[When Justice Demands Inequality](#)." *The Journal of Moral Philosophy*. 12(2): 172–194.
- 2014 Thrasher, John. "[Uniqueness and Symmetry in Bargaining Theories of Justice](#)." *Philosophical Studies*. 167(3): 683–699.
- 2014 Thrasher, John. "[Ordering Anarchy](#)." *Rationality, Markets and Morals*. 5(1): 30–46.
- 2013 Thrasher, John. "[Reconciling Justice and Pleasure in Epicurean Contractarianism](#)." *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*. 16(2): 423–436.

Chapters in Edited Volumes

- 2026 Thrasher, John. "Adam Smith on Liberalism and Libertarianism." In Nir Ben-Moshe, Remy Debes, and Michelle Schwarze (eds.) *The Smithian Mind*. Routledge.
- 2024 Thrasher, John. "Polycentric Justice." In David Thunder and Pablo Paniagua (eds.) *Polycentric Governance and the Good Society: A Normative and Philosophical Investigation*. Lexington Books.
- 2024 Thrasher, John. "Consensus, Contract, and Diversity." In Michael Moehler and John Thrasher (eds.) *New Approaches to Social Contract Theory: Liberty, Equality, Diversity, and the Open Society*. 206–226. Oxford University Press.
- 2023 Thrasher, John. "Experimental Political Philosophy: A Manifesto." In Matt Lindauer (ed.) *Advances in Experimental Political Philosophy*. Bloomsbury.
- 2023 Nichols, Shaun and John Thrasher. "What Does Labor Mixing Get You?" In Matt Lindauer (ed.) *Advances in Experimental Political Philosophy*. Bloomsbury.
- 2023 Thrasher, John. "Permission, Prohibition, and Dynamism." In Jonathan Adler (ed.) *Climate Liberalism*. Palgrave.
- 2022 Thrasher, John. "Game Theory." In Chris Melenovsky (ed.) *Routledge Companion to Philosophy, Politics, and Economics*. 67–80. Routledge.
- 2022 Thrasher, John. "Contractarian Justifications." In Ben Ferguson and Matt Zwolinski (eds.) *Routledge Companion to Libertarianism*. 56–67. Routledge.
- 2019 Freiman, Chris and John Thrasher. "The Right to Own the Means of Production." In Jahel Queralto and Bas van der Vossen (eds.) *Economic Liberties as Human Rights*. Routledge.
- 2018 Thrasher, John. "When Equality Matters." In David Boonin (ed.) *The Palgrave Handbook of Philosophy and Public Policy*. Palgrave. 182–199.
- 2017 Thrasher, John and Gerald Gaus. "The Calculus of Consent." In Jacob Levy (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Classics in Contemporary Political Theory*. Oxford University Press.
- 2017 Thrasher, John. "Social Contractarianism." In Brennan, Jason, Bas van der Vossen, and David Schmidtz (eds.) *The Routledge Handbook of Libertarianism*. Routledge.
- 2015 Gaus, Gerald and John Thrasher. "Rational Choice and the Original Position: The (Many) Models of Rawls and Harsanyi." In Timothy Hinton (ed.) *The Original Position*. Cambridge University Press.
- 2015 Schmidtz, David and John Thrasher. "Bankers, Vampires, and Organ Sellers: Who Can You Trust?" In Garnett, Robert, Paul Lewis, and Lenore Ealy (eds.) *Commerce and Community: Ecologies of Social Cooperation*. Routledge.
- 2014 Schmidtz, David and John Thrasher. "The Virtues of Justice." In Timpe, Kevin and Craig A. Boyd (eds.) *Virtues and their Vices*. Oxford University Press.

Reference Works

- 2024 Gaus, Gerald and John Thrasher. "Social Evolution." In Fred D'Agostino and Ryan Muldoon (eds.) *The Routledge Companion to Social and Political Philosophy* 2nd Edition. Routledge.
- 2021 D'Agostino, Fred, Gerald Gaus, and John Thrasher. "Contemporary Approaches to the Social Contract." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
- 2020 Halliday, Dan and John Thrasher. "Taxation." *The International Encyclopedia of Ethics*. Hugh LaFollette (ed.).

Book Reviews

- 2026 Thrasher, John. "Review of *Justice and Reciprocity* by Andrew Lister." *Ethics*, 136(2), 425–430.
- 2024 Thrasher, John. "Review of *Liberal Freedom: Pluralism, Polarization, and Politics* by Eric MacGilvray." *The Independent Review*, 29(1), 187–190.
- 2021 Thrasher, John. "Review of *Democratic Equality* by James Lindley Wilson." *Review of Politics* 83(4).
- 2019 Thrasher, John. "Review of *Cooperation and Excellence: A Premodern Case for Capitalism* by George Bragues." *The Independent Review*, 23(3).
- 2018 Thrasher, John. "The Price of Sociality: A Review of *The Philosophy of Social Evolution* by Jonathan Birch." *Metascience*.
- 2014 Thrasher, John. "Review of *Free Market Fairness* by John Tomasi." *Public Choice* 159(1–2): 309–311.

2013 Schmidt, David and John Thrasher. "Review of *Credit and Blame* by Charles Tilly." *The European Legacy: Toward New Paradigms*. 18(7): 967.

2011 Thrasher, John. "Review of *The Bounds of Reason: Game Theory and the Unification of the Behavioral Sciences* by Herbert Gintis." *The Journal of Value Inquiry*. 45(1): 85–90.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Contestable Democracy: How Conflict Sustains Political Legitimacy

"Putting Capitalism in its Place" (with [Dan Halliday](#)) (Under Review)

"The Ends of Our Being: Hume on the Epicurean"

"The Myth of the Liberal Locke" (with [Eric Schliesser](#))

"Realistic Realism" (with [Keith Hankins](#))

"Beyond Pareto" (with [Keith Hankins](#))

"From the Reign of Saturn to the End of History: Conjectural History and Stadial Theory in Smithian Liberalism"

"Of Pigs and Porters: *The Wealth of Nations* as Plato's *Republic* Inverted"

INVITED SEMINARS AND CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

2026 Distinguished Lecturer on Free Speech at The Ohio State University, Hume and Hellenism Conference (University of Florida), University of Georgia, International Adam Smith Society (Glasgow), PPE Society Meeting (London)

2025 University of California, San Diego, George Mason University, International Adam Smith Society Meeting (Lecce, Italy), PPE Society Meeting (London), PPE Society Meeting (New Orleans), Oxford Studies in Political Philosophy, The Ohio State University

2024 University of Texas, The Ohio State University, University at Buffalo, American Philosophical Association (Central), International Adam Smith Society Meeting (Tokyo, Japan), PPE Society Meeting

2023 Adam Smith @ 300 (Edinburgh, UK)

2022 University of California, Irvine (Logic and Philosophy of Science), University at Buffalo, PPE Society Meeting

2021 Virginia Tech

2020 University at Buffalo, International Adam Smith Society Meeting (Tokyo, Japan), PPE Society Meeting [All canceled due to Covid-19]

2019 Harvard Business School, Waseda University (Tokyo, Japan), PPE Society Meeting

2018 Texas Tech University, Monash University, PPE Society Meeting

2017 Australasian Seminar in Early Modern Philosophy (University of Sydney), PPE Society Meeting, American Philosophical Association (Pacific)

2016 University of Arizona, Seoul National University, Southern Economic Association, Social Philosophy & Policy, Australasian Association of Philosophy, American Philosophical Association (Pacific)

2015 Australian National University (Philosophy Department), Australian National University (Center for Moral, Political and Social Theory), University of Melbourne, Australasian Association of Philosophy, American Philosophical Association (Pacific)

2014 New Zealand Association for Philosophy, American Philosophical Association (Pacific)

2013 London School of Economics, University of Utah, University of Manchester

2012 University of New Orleans

2011 Southern Economic Association, Rational Choice Contractarianism: 25 Years after *Morals by Agreement* (York University)

RESEARCH SUPERVISION

MA

Monash University

Matthew Ringenbergs (with [Toby Handfield](#)) HD1

2018–2019

Lucy Mayne HD1	2016–2018
James McGuire HD1	2016–2018

Honors

Monash University

Jade Popper	2017
Andrew Belyea-Tate	2016
Lucy Mayne	2015

TEACHING

The Ohio State University

PPE: Tradition, Progress, and Utopia (with Eric MacGilvray)	2026
PPE: Economy, Polity, and Community (with Eric MacGilvray)	2025

Chapman University

Political Philosophy	2025
Social Norms: The Rules of the Game (with Erik Kimbrough)	2025
Toleration and its Discontents (with Michael Moses)	2023
Philosophy in Literature	
Tragedy and Philosophy	2022
On the Nature of Things Falling Apart	2019
Moral Theory	2021
Utopia and Dystopia in Fiction & Film (with Michael Moses)	2019–2023
David Hume (Junior/Senior Seminar)	2020
Cause, Effect, and Freedom (with Erik Kimbrough)	2019
Games and Decisions	2019
Global Justice	2018
The Tragedy in Morality (with Brennan McDavid)	2018
Presidential Seminar (with Jan Osborn)	2018

Monash University

Honors Seminars

Hobbes and Spinoza	2017
Conventions, Norms, and Contracts	2015, 2016
Moral Psychology	2015
Rationality and Morality	2014

Undergraduate Classes

Human Rights Theory 1	2015–2017
Democratic Theory	2015–2017
Political Philosophy	2014–2017

University of Arizona

The Social Contract	2013
The Ethics & Economics of Wealth Creation	2009

SELECTED GRANTS, HONORS, AND AWARDS

- 2026– PI, PPE Research Consortium Grant, “PPE Experimental Lab” (\$100,000)
- 2023–2025 Wang-Fradkin Professorship, Chapman University
- 2022–2025 Co-PI, Templeton Project “Markets in the Social and Moral Context” (\$2,289,126)

2017–2022 Co-PI, Australian Research Council, Discovery Project DP170102834, “Informal Sanctions and Bad Social Norms” (AUD \$231,500)
2020 Discourse Initiative Grant (\$15,000)
2020 Grant for Experimental Pilot (\$4,000)
2015–2018 Dean’s Commendation for Early Career Researcher, Monash University
2016 Monash Focus Program Grant (AUD \$50,000)
2014–2015 SoPHIS Research Grants, Monash University
2015 New Appointee Research Grant, Monash University (AUD \$5,000)
2013 Fink Prize for the Most Outstanding Graduate Student, Philosophy, University of Arizona
2013 University of Arizona Excellence Dissertation Fellowship
2012 Bernard Marcus Fellowship
2011 H.B. Earhart Fellowship
2010 Bernard Marcus Fellowship
2009 Thomas W. Smith Fellowship

SERVICE

2024–2025 Evaluator, [Philosophical Gourmet Report](#)
2023–2025 Faculty Member, [Math, Physics, and Philosophy](#) Ph.D. Program Steering Committee, Chapman University
2022–2025 Director, [Law and Liberal Arts](#) Minor, Chapman University
2021–2025 Chair, Philosophy Faculty Review Committee, Chapman University
2021– Committee Member, [Gaus Memorial Prize](#), PPE Society
2021– Founder & Organizer, [PPE Summer Graduate Workshop](#), Chapman University
2022–2024 Senator for Schmid College, Faculty Senate, Chapman University
2019–2020 Search Committee, Research Associate, Smith Institute for Political Economy and Philosophy
2015–2018 SoPHIS Honors Coordinator, Monash University
2014–2018 Philosophy Honors Coordinator, Monash University
2017 Project Editor, Social Philosophy and Policy
2015 Organizing Committee, Australasian Association of Philosophy Conference
2014 Project Editor, Social Philosophy and Policy
2012–2014 Assistant Editor, Social Philosophy and Policy

REVIEWING

Journals

Adam Smith Review, American Philosophical Quarterly, American Political Science Review, American Political Thought, American Journal of Political Science, American Sociological Review, Analysis, Australasian Journal of Philosophy, British Journal of Political Science, Canadian Journal of Philosophy, Collective Intelligence, Crime and Delinquency, Economics & Philosophy, Episteme, Erasmus Journal for Philosophy & Economics, Erkenntnis, Ergo, Ethical Theory & Moral Practice, Ethical Perspectives, Hobbes Studies, Human Nature, Japanese Journal of Political Science, Journal of Applied Philosophy, Journal of Contextual Economics, Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization, Journal of Economic Psychology, Journal of Ethics, Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy, Journal of Institutional Economics, Journal of Philosophy, Journal of Philosophical Research, Journal of Politics, Journal of Political Philosophy, Journal of Social Philosophy, Journal of Value Inquiry, Legal Theory, Manuscript, Mind and Machines, Oxford Studies in Experimental Philosophy, Oxford Studies in Political Philosophy, Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, Philosopher’s Imprint, Pacific Philosophical Quarterly, Philosophical Papers, Philosophical Perspectives, Philosophical Psychology, Philosophy, Philosophy & Public Affairs, Politics, Philosophy & Economics, Philosophy of Science, Philosophical Studies, Philosophical Quarterly, Polish Journal of Philosophy, Polity, Public Affairs

Quarterly, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences Nexus (PNAS Nexus), Ratio, Res Publica, Social Choice & Welfare, Social Theory and Practice, Social Philosophy & Policy, Synthese, Technology in Society, Theoria

Presses

Cambridge University Press
Hackett
Oxford University Press
Princeton University Press
Routledge

Grant Assessor and External Evaluator

American Academy in Berlin
Australasian Association of Philosophy
Australian Research Council
Central European University
Council for the Humanities of the Netherlands
John Templeton Foundation
Organization for Scientific Research
Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique (FNRS)
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC)

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

PPE Society
David Hume Society
International Adam Smith Society
Human Behavior and Evolution Society